

POISONING BY CESSPOOL AND OTHER EXHALATIONS.—Two persons, a man and his wife, were lately found dead in their bed-room, in a house at Sheffield, and various conjectures arose as to the cause of death. Post-mortem examinations were made without avail, although the lungs and brain were found congested. It was afterwards discovered, however, that at the south end of the house, and about four yards distant, there is a cesspool, into which was thrown, about a week before, a mattress, on which a sick man had lain a long time. Some mischievous person had set it on fire, and it continued in a smouldering state all the week. Mrs. Hall, who was asthmatical, complained of the stench from the cesspool interrupting her breathing, and her husband covered over the smouldering mass with ashes. A heavy fall of rain formed a superficial layer into a concrete, so that the exhalations could no longer arise. The noxious steam consequently penetrated the foundation-wall of Hall's house, which was already decayed by the action of the foul matter, and the fumes stole into the bed-room. It was a small low room, very imperfectly ventilated, the fire-place being closed by a fire-board. While the unconscious victims were quietly reposing, the room became filled with the noxious exhalation, which being strongly charged with sulphuretted hydrogen gas, destroyed their lives so subtly as not to disturb their sleep. The olfactory nerves had been previously blunted by the abominable stench.

CHARING-CROSS HOSPITAL.—The annual report of the committee of this most useful and valuable hospital has just been issued for the year last past. Its importance to the building trades especially will be seen from the following extract as to cases of accident and emergency:—

	To 31st Dec. 1880	To 31st Dec. 1881	Total
From falls off scaffolds, ladders, buildings, vessels, lofts, staircases, and windows; or down cellars, trap-doors, areas, &c.	2,320	728	3,048
The falling of excavated earth, buildings, chimneys, timbers, stones, heavy weights, &c.	880	93	973
Steam-engines, mill-cogs, crane-tackle, and other machinery	285	78	363

In all, 2,238 cases of accident and emergency were treated during last year. The institution has lost a number of its best supporters by death during the year; but it is to be hoped their places will be more than supplied in the year that is opening. A special appeal is made for the completion of the hospital buildings, so as to admit of fifty additional beds in four invalid wards.

THE MARIONETTE THEATRE.—Science, and Terpsichore, who wildly succeeded her, have retired from what was the Adelaide Gallery, Strand, and yielded their places to the Momus or Melpomene, we know not which, of the Marionettes. What is a Marionette? asks a mere Englishman. The French dictionary answers him—a puppet. And these puppets are so ingeniously contrived to imitate the motions of humanity, and so well dressed up to the proprieties of the drama, that it is scarcely possible to avoid being amused by them. Considerable wit, too, is superadded to the brisk satirical and emotional action of these wooden bodies, though not blockheads. The theatre, moreover, is decorated with much taste and elegance.

EXETER DIOCESAN ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY.—On the 8th, the usual quarterly meeting was held, the Rev. Canon Rogers in the chair. Papers were read by Mr. Furneaux, of Plymouth, and Mr. William Crabbe, of Exeter. The former gave an account of the rebuilding of the parish church of Yealinton, under the direction of Mr. Butterfield; and the latter, a graphic historical description illustrated by drawings by Mr. Ashworth, which have been chromolithed by Day, for the next part of transactions) of Bishop Briscoe's monument in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral.

PUBLIC BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES.—The committee for promoting the establishment of baths and washhouses for the labouring classes state that they are actively promoting the establishment of these institutions in all parts of the country, as well as abroad, by the distribution of plans and practical information. They add that in our smaller towns baths and wash-houses can be erected at a cost of 2,000*l.*, 4,000*l.*, or 6,000*l.*, exclusive of charge for land. They publish returns for the year ending Christmas 1881, of which the following is an abstract:—

ESTABLISHMENTS	BATH DEPARTMENT			WASH-HOUSE DEPARTMENT		
	Number of Bathers	Receipts.		Number of Washers	Receipts.	
METROPOLIS.		£ s. d.			£ s. d.	
The Model, Whitechapel...	156,310	2,143	7 5	43,492	531	1 2
St. Martin-in-the-fields	215,045	3,467	17 0	30,300	444	14 1
St. Marylebone	173,157	2,212	3 7	24,715	300	10 10
St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster	93,406	972	2 1	13,146	147	1 1
Greenwich	21,405	345	17 5	682	24	4 0
Totals	647,242	9,141	0 8	132,231	1,000	19 2
COUNTRY.						
Liverpool—Cornwallis-st.	56,980	1,263	12 1			
Paul-street	42,353	576	4 10	19,455	190	12 10
Hull	63,746	669	14 1	4,984	91	6 8
Bristol	44,273	547	10 11	6,746	82	11 1
Preston	24,218	241	12 10	2,179	27	19 4
Birmingham	76,649	1,018	11 8			

METROPOLITAN SEWERS COMMISSION.—A special meeting was held on 21st inst. in Greek-street, when the resignation of Mr. Forster, the chief engineer to the commission, under somewhat curious circumstances, was announced. The reasons given for the resignation were, that the line of the Victoria-street sewer was not of the engineer's selection, and, on the contrary, had been carried out against his opinion; that he had met with frequent opposition on the part of one of the commissioners, Captain Veitch; that his best and most efficient assistant had been dismissed without sufficient reason; and, finally, that the exercise of his duties had brought on serious illness. The commissioners, on the ground of Mr. Forster's illness, determined to postpone acceptance of his resignation, in order that he might have an opportunity to give an explanation.

METROPOLITAN SANITARY ASSOCIATION.—The acting committee have resumed their sittings for the present session, at their office, 10, Craig's-court, Charing-cross. It is to be hoped they will receive such support as may enable them to act efficiently.

NEW PILE-DRIVING MACHINE.—The works under the superintendence of Mr. Rendel—the engineer—at the West India Docks, have been supplied with a new pile-driving machine. A pile 25 feet in length was driven into the ground by it in eight minutes; by the old process it would have taken three hours. The engine is capable of making from sixty to seventy strokes a minute. It will be at work for some months.

NEW WINDOW, KENSINGTON.—A stained glass window, by O'Connor, has, during the past week, been put up in St. Barnabas Church, Kensington, at a cost of 350*l.* It is a large perpendicular window of two stories of seven lights each. In the supermullions are the evangelistic symbols and figures of angels; the large lights contain single figures under rich canopies arranged as below:—

St. Philip	St. Matthew
St. James Minor	St. Andrew
St. Matthias	St. Peter
	Our Lord in Glory seated holding orb and cup, his other hand raised in benediction
St. Barnabas	
St. Jude	St. John
St. Simon	St. James Major
St. Bartholomew	St. Thomas

"DON'T CARE!"—Don't care is not always let off so easily as one would imagine. The man who does not care for others, who does not sympathise with and help them, is very often pursued, even in this life, with a just retribution. He does not care for the foul, pestilential air breathed by the inhabitants a few streets off; but the fever which has been bred there at length comes into his own household, and snatches away those whom he loves the dearest. He does not care for the criminality, ignorance, and poverty nursed there; but the burglar and the thief find him out in his seclusion. He does not care for pauperism; but the heavy poor-rates compel him to pay for it half-yearly. He does not care for politics—pooh, pooh! what has he to do with them? but lo! there is an income tax, or an assessed tax, or a war tax, and then he finds Don't Care is not such cheap policy after all. Don't Care was the man who was to blame for the well-known catastrophe, thus popularly related:—"For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, and for want of a horse the man was lost."—*E. Cook's Journal.*

SWEEPING MACHINES.—In a recent number of *THE BUILDER* it is stated by "Clericus," that the sweeping machine for chimneys at present in use is totally useless in cases where there is any flexure of the flue. I do not know if you are acquainted with the sweeping machine used in some parts of Germany, which answers very well with the round chimneys introduced into most modern buildings. It consists of a rope, to one end of which is attached a stiff broom, in an inverted position, and under this a cannon ball. The boy goes on the roof of the building, and lets the rope with broom and weight attached to it down the chimney, and, by drawing it up and down, clears the flue effectually without being obliged to enter it. It is evident that the flexibility of the rope, and the weight attached to it, allow the broom to follow all the curvatures of the flue.—*E. E.*

THE BOSTON FIRE ALARMS.—Dr. W. F. Channing is stated, in *The Boston Almanack* for 1882, to have first published the application of the telegraph to fire alarms in 1845. This gentleman laid the details before the Boston City Government in March last, and 10,000*l.* were voted to carry the system into operation in June. The length of wires erected in the city is 49 miles. There are duplicate wires between every station. They are seldom broken, however. The circuits are tested hourly. The signal station is a small cast-iron box placed on the side of a building. Responsible persons in the immediate vicinity have the keys, and at an alarm of fire, the crank in the box is turned slowly round six times, and intelligence is thus conveyed to the City Building of the exact locality of the fire. In each church, connected with the alarm circuit, is machinery like the striking part of a clock, with a weight attached, and an electromagnet, connected with the circuit. When the operator at the City Building receives intelligence from any signal station, he strikes, by means of the alarm circuit, on all of the bells at the same time, the numbers of strokes corresponding with the district from which the signal comes, and the firemen immediately know where they are wanted. The circuits of wire are so arranged that no alarm can be communicated except from the signal boxes, forty in number, placed throughout the city about 100 rods apart. An officer of the fire department can ascertain the number of the station in any district from which an alarm of fire proceeds, by going to any signal box and making the simplest signal. The operator at the central office will reply by counting out the number of the station, by means of the clicks of a little electro-magnet in the signal box at which the inquiry is made. The position of the fire would then be known within 50 rods. If a fire is soon extinguished the engineer sends to one of the signal boxes, and communicates the signal of "All out," which is, "one, one-two,"—"one, one-two," so the central office, from whence the same signal is struck upon the alarm bells, and the engines in all parts of the city are enabled at once to turn back.